

"Is It Okay for a Christians to _____?" - 1 Corinthians 6:12 – December 5th, 2014

- The title I've chosen for today's teaching is in the form of a fill in the blank question of, "Is It Okay for Christians to _____."
- I'm often times asked this question, which always starts out in this way, is it okay for a Christian to _____? Or, Can I still go to heaven if _____?
- Usually, it's followed by something like, watch "R-Rated" movies, or smoke cigarettes or, drink wine, this because, the Bible doesn't say no.
- In other words the Bible doesn't lay down the law as it were when it comes to specific things like what kind of music Christians can listen to.
- It's for this reason that the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, deemed it necessary to address issues concerning what's lawful and what's not.
- Please know that this in no way applies to those matters that the Word of God makes explicitly clear are sinful or if you prefer, are unlawful.
- By way of example, God's Word makes it very clear in no uncertain terms that it is not okay for Christians to live together before marriage.
- However, there are certain things that the Bible is either silent about, or unclear about, and that's what the Apostle Paul is addressing here.
- Thankfully, not only does Paul address these matters, he answers these matters by giving us a three-pronged template of sorts in verse 12.
- Perhaps better said, Paul gives us a three-question test with which to determine whether or not a Christian can or should do certain things.
- Before we take this test, as it were, we, first and foremost, need to take note of what Paul says to them at the beginning of verse twelve.
- Namely, that all things are lawful, as was the saying in that day, which speaks of those things that scripture doesn't specifically say are not.
- The reason I point this out is that the carnal Corinthians were actually wanting to know how much they as Christians could get away with.
- It seems that, in their carnality, they were pushing the proverbial envelope spiritually, which is why Paul is now confronting them so firmly.
- Lest we think there's a disconnect between them then and us now, we would do well to admit there's a carnal Corinthian in every one of us.
- By that I mean, the carnal sin nature resident in every single one of us, has the propensity to push our Biblical freedom to an unbiblical end.
- When this happens, we, like the Corinthians, will adopt sayings like, all things are lawful, or I have the liberty and freedom in Christ to do it.
- Actually, this is true, but, only when it passes the test that we have here, woven into the fabric of just this one verse in 1 Corinthians 6:12.

1. Will I be benefited because of it? (Verse 12a)

12a "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial...

- v12a Paul says to them, yes, I know how the saying goes, in that you say, "I have the right to do anything," but, not everything is beneficial.
- The first question every Christian needs to ask them self, concerning the freedom they have in Christ is, will doing this be beneficial to me?
- In other words, if I were to _____ would it benefit me personally, bless me spiritually, and draw me closer to the Lord relationally?
- Allow me to use surfing the TV channels and or the Internet, or more specifically, Facebook or other social networking sites as an example.
- Let's apply this to test question number one in the first part of verse 12; is being on Facebook or watching TV beneficial to me when I do it.
- It can be, but, if the content we're viewing on the TV, or the posts we're reading or videos we're watching aren't beneficial, then, don't do it.

2. Will I be mastered by it? (Verse 12b)

12b ... "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

- v12b Paul again says, yes, I know how the saying goes, you say, "I have the right to do anything," but, I will not be mastered by anything.
- The second question every Christian needs to ask them self, concerning the freedom they have in Christ is, will I become enslaved to this?
- In other words, if I were to _____ could it have the potential of becoming an obsession, or worse yet, an addiction enslaving me?

Pastor Damian Kyle of Calvary Chapel Modesto in California said it best this way, "We all understand that there's an addictive nature to sin but, sometimes what we don't understand is that there's also an addictive nature to liberty too. ... Sometimes we need to not only say "no" to the bad in order to say "yes" to the good, we also have to say "no" to the good in order to say "yes" to the best."

3. Will I be built up with it (1 Corinthians 10:23-24)

1 Corinthians 10:23–24 (NIV) — 23 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. 24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

- In 10:23 Paul echoes 6:12 but in 10:24 he adds to this that no one should seek their own good, but the good of others as well.
- The third question every Christian needs to ask them self, concerning the freedom they have in Christ is, does this build me, and others up.
- In other words, if I were to _____ would it edify and build myself, and others up, or would it tear down, or even stumble others instead?
- This is where the controversy of Christians drinking comes into the picture, or, as they're also known by their other name "Sipping Saints."
- Now, I am keenly aware there are those who would argue that scripture says Christians are not to drink, period. This is simply not the truth.
- The reason is scripture forbids drunkenness not drinking. Try as one may, to forbid Christians to drink wine cannot be Biblically supported.
- Be that as it may, Christians who have the liberty to drink wine must ask them self the aforementioned questions that are in today's text.
- First, does drinking wine benefit me? It did for Timothy, whom Paul, in 1st Timothy 5:23 told to drink a little wine, for his stomach illness.
- Second, if I drink wine, am I the type of person that has the proclivity to become an alcoholic, such that, I become enslaved and addicted.
- To me, it's this third question that has been the biggest problem in the body of Christ today, and it's that of stumbling others with our liberty.
- This question is of paramount importance by virtue of how our freedom to drink wine can really stumble our Christian brothers and sisters.
- It's for this reason that Christians should either refrain from drinking at all, or, if they do drink wine, they should never be in a public setting.

I'll close with a true story about one of the greatest baseball players of all time, Babe Ruth, who once was offered a good sum of money if he would allow himself to be photographed with a bottle of beer in his hand. The brewer wanted the picture for advertising purposes. It is said that Babe Ruth replied, "No, I have autographed too many baseballs of boys of America to think of helping advertise the sale of beer. Many of these boys regard me as a hero, and I'll not do anything to lessen their esteem of me." I don't know if Babe Ruth ever professed to be a Christian, but I do know that he would have had the liberty to do this. However, he chose not to, for the sake of those it could have stumbled.